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LIZA GARDNER,
Plaintiff,

-against-

SEAN COMBS,
AARON HALL,
DONALD EARLE DEGRATE JR., AKA,
DEVANTE SWING,
UMG RECORDINGS, INC., UNIVERSAL
MUSIC GROUP, N.V.
JOHN DOES 1-10 (names being fictitious and
used to connote an unidentified person
responsible for this occurrence), JANE DOES
1-10 (names being fictitious and used to
connote an unidentified person responsible for
this occurrence), ABC CORPORATIONS 1-10
(names being fictitious and used to connote
unidentified entities responsible for this
occurrence),
Defendants.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

DOCKET NO.: 2:24-cv-07729-LMG-JRA

**AFFIDAVIT OF
KIRK BURROWES**

I, Kirk Burrowes, hereby declare under penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen (18) and legally competent to testify regarding the matters stated herein.
2. I make this affidavit based on my personal knowledge, firsthand observations, and direct experiences during my tenure working with Sean Combs, Janice Smalls, UpTown Records/MCA Records, and Bad Boy Entertainment, d/b/a Bad Boy Records.
3. I am the co-founder of Bad Boy Entertainment, d/b/a Bad Boy Records.

My Beginning With Sean Combs, Andre Harrell, and UpTown Records/MCA Records

4. When I met Sean Combs, I was asked to mentor him by my former boss, Andre Harrell who is the founder of UpTown Records.
5. As an intern, Sean had a bad temper. Despite the work he did with the artist and for Andre Harrell, he had a hard time controlling his temper and his propensity for violence. On one occasion, Sean beat up his girlfriend on the campus of Howard University. It was so bad that Andre Harrell had to get him and bring him back to New York. Andre even hired a lawyer for Sean in fear of Sean being arrested and or sued by the woman he assaulted. Sean then lived with Andre for a period.
6. When I met Sean, he was a very eager and hungry young man.
7. He wanted to be a success in the music industry and often did things and took risks to please Andre Harrell and the executives at MCA Records, (a subsidiary of UMG).
8. At one point Sean and I were very close. So close that he made the godfather of his first child, Justin Dior Combs.
9. In addition to Sean, I was very close and heavily engrained in the Combs family. I became a close friend and confidant of Janice Smalls, aka Janice Combs¹.
10. Janice and I would later become co-owners of Bad Boy Entertainment. Janice owned 75% and I owned 25%. I also provided the seed money for the create of Bad Boy Entertainment.
11. I worked directly with Sean and other industry executives, including Andre Harrell and Jimmy Jenkins.
12. I played a pivotal role in marketing, artist development, business operations, and event organization within UpTown Records/MCA Records and later as the co-founder of Bad Boy Entertainment, d/b/a Bad Boy Records.
13. I began working with Andre Harrell and UpTown Records/MCA Records in the early 1990's (1990/1991).

Andre Harrell and UpTown Records/MCA Records (UMG) Housing and Transportation Allowance

14. I was aware of the housing UpTown Records/MCA Records provided to their artists in the tri-state area.

¹ She never officially married Sean's father.

15. This was not uncommon at the time.
16. In the early 1990's the crime rate in New York City was at an all-time high and I remember having conversations with Andre Harrell and UpTown Records/MCA Records executives who were extremely concerned about having their "Urban Artists," such as Guy, Jodeci, Mary J Blige, and Aaron Hall, exposed to the crime, violence, drugs, and prostitution that was prevalent in NYC (Harlem, Brooklyn, Queens, and midtown Manhattan) at that time.
17. For example, in 1989 there was the central park 5 case which was the crescendo to a wave of central park robberies, killings, kidnappings, and rapes. In 1990 there was the Happy Land Social Club fire where 80+ people were killed. There was a lot of subway killings; cab drivers were being killed and stabbed; kids were being kidnapped and killed; and there was a copycat Zodiac killer in Brooklyn who shot and killed several people. Needless to say, it was very scary times.
18. As a result of these events, Andre Harrell and UpTown Records/MCA Records executives provided housing and transportation for their urban artists like: Jodeci (New Jersey housing), Aaron Hall (New Jersey housing), members of the group GUY, Teddy Riley and Damion Hall (New Jersey housing), and singer Mary J. Blige (NYC Apartment). They all received housing paid for and provided by the label UpTown Records/MCA Records which are owned by UMG.
19. Upon information and belief, the practice of providing housing and transportation for new artists is something that record labels, like UMG still does today. It is a common practice because these labels have a vested interest in protecting the investment they make in their artists.
20. It is important to remember that these UpTown Records/MCA Records artists were from very poor and humble beginnings. For example, the members of the group Jodeci were from North Carolina and were preacher's kids. They were very poor, and Andre Harrell nearly passed on signing them, but they had written 20+ songs and brought a sound that was unique in the 1980's. it was a mix of soul and gospel. Andre decided to turn Jodeci over to Sean, who was an intern at the time, and instructed him to enhance their sound and change their image. Mary J. Blige came from a single parent home and lived in the Schlobohm Housing Projects located near Yonkers, New York.

21. When many of the urban artists signed with Andre Harrell and UpTown Records/MCA Records they did not have the financial resources to pay for proper clothing, so that was also provided by Andre Harrell and UpTown Records/MCA Records.
22. In fact, Sean Combs was responsible for developing the image and look of the members of the group Jodeci and Mary J. Blige. The signature blond wig that Mary J. Blige was later known for was inspired by Janice Smalls "Combs."
23. In addition to providing these artists with housing, UpTown Records/MCA Records provided them with transportation in the form of private drivers or taxis to get to and from New York City.

Parties and Events UpTown Records/MCA Records

24. Due to the lack of social media, UpTown Records/MCA Records would host album release parties, and album listening parties at their offices and studios in New York. These events were attended by newspaper outlets, radio station executives, promoters, and record label executives. The purpose of these parties was to gain recognition for these new album releases and their new artists.
25. In the early 1990's, UpTown Records/MCA Records hosted a lavish party at MCA Records for their artist Guy to celebrate their second album. Guy was a major success due to Aaron Hall and Teddy Riley.
26. These parties were filled with models and attractive young men and women. There were excessive amounts of alcohol, and narcotics like cocaine. Marijuana was freely available as well.
27. In the early 1990's at the UpTown Records/MCA Records label parties there were no checks and balances to ensure that minors were present. The goal was "the more the merrier."
28. The purpose was to have a packed house to encourage the radio station executives and journalist to build up a hype and report on the success of these parties to build a buzz around the album and the artists.

The Rise and Success of Sean Combs from Intern to Executive

29. I was involved in financial structuring, deal negotiations, artist management, and corporate oversight, allowing me intimate access to the practices and operations of Sean and his affiliated companies.
30. Sean started as an intern assistant under Curt Woodley, then Senior Vice President of Artist Development and A&R at UpTown Records/MCA Records.
31. He gained favor and influence within the label by criticizing the work of other A&R executives, positioning himself as a more valuable and strategic asset.
32. Sean exploited personal weaknesses of his colleagues, including Curt Woodley's hearing impairment, to discredit him and facilitate his own rise.
33. Within a short period, Sean ascended from intern to Vice President of A&R, where he assumed control over artist assignments, marketing, styling, and financial structuring of label operations.
34. Following his success with Mary J. Blige, Jodeci, and Heavy D, Combs was allowed to launch Bad Boy Entertainment, d/b/a Bad Boy Records, which started as a subsidiary of UpTown Records/MCA Records.
35. At the ages of 19-20, Combs was not only managing artists but overseeing full-scale music production, artist development, event coordination, and marketing strategy.
36. As previously stated, throughout my tenure at UpTown Records/MCA Records, and then later Bad Boy Entertainment, d/b/a Bad Boy Records, I attended numerous industry-sponsored parties and exclusive events orchestrated by Sean Combs, including his "Daddy's House" events.
37. The primary objectives of these parties were:
 - a. To expand Seans' influence in the music industry.
 - b. To secure relationships with DJs for record airplay.
 - c. To elevate his brand identity through association with high-profile industry figures.
38. These gatherings regularly involved young women, including potential minors, but I cannot personally confirm their ages.
39. The events featured heavy alcohol consumption, drug, and suggestive environments where young women were often dressed provocatively.

40. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, the culture at these events shifted toward heavier substance use, including ecstasy and other narcotics.
41. There was no formal oversight or protective measures in place to prevent potential misconduct or exploitation at these events.
42. The party culture and industry events expanded significantly when Sean moved operations to Los Angeles and Hollywood, leading to a more excessive and unchecked atmosphere.
43. The introduction of lavish parties, private jet travel, and celebrity-driven social settings escalated the stakes and further created an environment where young women were highly vulnerable.

Bad Boy Entertainment, d/b/a Bad Boy Records

44. As was the case at UpTown Records/MCA Records, it was common practice to provide transportation, housing, and financial resources for artists and their associates at Bad Boy Entertainment, d/b/a Bad Boy Records.
45. Artists were assigned accountants, bookkeepers, and legal teams to manage their funds, properties, and financial obligations—often in ways that benefitted the label more than the artist.
46. Travel accommodations, including private cars, flights, and luxury lodging, were arranged by the label as part of standard operations.
47. It was not uncommon for artists, guests, and industry figures to be transported en masse to exclusive party locations, including private islands, mansions, private residents, and out-of-state destinations.
48. Many of these trips were orchestrated by Bad Boy Entertainment, d/b/a Bad Boy Records. I personally knew this because I handled the finances and would seek reimbursements from our parent company like UMG.
49. At times, as A&R at UpTown Records/MCA Records, Sean himself, who controlled travel schedules, accommodations, and exclusive VIP settings, would orchestrate these trips.
50. As profits increased, Sean took direct control over financial resources, including monies that were owed to artists and executives but remained unpaid.
51. These diverted funds were used to:
 - a. Expand Seans' personal brand.

- b. Finance luxury gifts, high-profile sponsorships, and lifestyle indulgences.
 - c. Ensure continued access to elite industry circles through extravagant incentives.
52. Numerous artists and executives were left underpaid or without compensation while Sean flourished financially.
53. This pattern of financial mismanagement became a recurring issue, with many artists ultimately severing ties due to lack of transparency.

The statements made herein are based on my personal experiences and firsthand knowledge of events and operations within UpTown Records/MCA Records, Bad Boy Entertainment, d/b/a Bad Boy Records, and Sean Combs' business dealings. I swear, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America, that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

DATED: February 10, 2025


Kirk Burrowes (Feb 11, 2025 15:00 EST)
Kirk Burrowes